

the society of local enthusiasts. After Wycliffe's death, Purvey left Lutterworth and appeared in Bristol, bringing his master's last message to the world. A priest ought sooner to omit matins and vespers than the preaching of the Word of God. The celebration of the Mass as then performed, Purvey called a human tradition, not evangelical or founded on Christ's commands. In Leicestershire, whence he had come, his friends cared so little to \* hear the blessed mutter of the Mass, and see God made and eaten all day long/ that they called these prolonged ceremonies 'blabbering with the lips.'<sup>1</sup>

In 1386 Nicolas Hereford landed in England, returning a sadder and a wiser man from his attempt to convert the Pope. He at once began to preach his condemned doctrines, at first in the neighbourhood of Canterbury, where he escaped Courte-nay's attempts to capture him. But when in January 1387 the King was called in to effect his arrest, he moved westwards to join Purvey and Aston.<sup>2</sup> Six months later the Bishop of Worcester issued a mandate against the Lollard leaders in his diocese, from which it appears that the conditions of the missionary work were at least as favourable as in the Leicester district. He complains that Hereford, Aston, Purvey and John Parker are traversing his diocese, 'e under a great cloak of sanctity,' that they preach in public, and also secretly in halls, chambers, parks and gardens, and that the parish churches and churchyards are often put at their service.<sup>3</sup> It is important to remember that this Bishopric of Worcester then ran down to the seaboard and included the great port towns of Bristol and Gloucester, where Lollardry had a strong footing.

William Swynderby, driven first from Leicester and then from Coventry, carried on the mission in the diocese of Hereford. Before his arrival a number of Lollards already existed there under the mild sway of Bishop John Gilbert, who was translated in 1389. The first action of Gilbert's successor, John Trevenant, was to issue mandates against

\* <sup>1</sup> Knighton, ii. 179-80 and 174.  
\* 69 a. Courtenay's *Register*, Tjambeth Library, f. 65 b, and  
\* Wilkins, iii. 202-3.